

Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems

Healthy child development is the cornerstone of a vital and successful future for our society. Good health practices, particularly during early childhood, optimize the development of durable brain architecture, promoting a child's ability to learn and to cope with challenges that make them productive adults.

An estimated 145,727 young children in Arkansas have parents who work full- or part-time. This figure indicates that a considerable number of children in Arkansas spend substantial time in formal child care settings. Such settings present an opportunity to promote health and behavior that will impact long-term health and development outcomes of children positively.

The Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems: Building Health through Integration grant,(AECCS) funded by HRSA, is focused on helping young children grow up healthy and ready to learn by addressing their physical, emotional and social health in a broad-based and coordinated way. The Medical Home Work Group, a consortium of state and community agencies who are stakeholders in early childhood, acts in an advisory role in the management of the AECCS work.

All ECCS grants have the following general goals:

- Increase access to health care
- Identify and manage social, emotional, and behavioral risks
- Improve early care and promote early learning
- Educate parents and caregivers about healthy child development
- Provide support for families and caregivers

AECCS Strategy

AECCS aims to promote the health and safety of Arkansas children in child care settings by strengthening health and safety requirements in the state Minimum Licensing Requirements (MLR) for child care settings.

Step 1. Identification of gaps in the current MLR by doing a crosswalk of this document against Stepping Stones

Step 2: Selection of 10 Caring for Our Standards (CFOC) standards that address the identified gaps.

Step 3: The implementation of the selected CFOC standards will be piloted in at least 5 child care centers using quality improvement methodology.

Step 4: CFOCs that were successfully implemented will be recommended for inclusion in the state MLR.

Selected CFOC Standards

- Written Policy on Use of medication
- Care Plan for CSHCN
- Health and Safety Education Topics for Staff
- Screen Time
- Active Opportunities for Physical Activity
- Playing Outdoors
- Oral Health
- Availability of Drinking Water
- Child Abuse/Neglect Education
- Care for Abused/neglected Children

What is happening now?

Piloting the standards is underway! See below our oral health and availability of drinking water standards in action.

Children enjoy brushing their teeth and child care providers demonstrate creative ways to store tooth brushes. Water stations encourage children to drink more water throughout the day.



Toothbrushing



Toothbrush
Storage



Water Stations



Medical Home Workgroup Collaborative Members

- AR DHS/Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education/Child Care Licensing/Better Beginnings
- Head Start
- Arkansas Disability Coalition/Family2Family
- Developmental Disability Services/Children's Services/DHS
- Arkansas Center for Health Improvement
- Arkansas Children's Hospital Research Institute
- Arkansas Division of Behavioral Health Services/DHS
- Arkansas Home Visiting Network
- UAMS Kids First
- Healthy Childcare Arkansas
- Arkansas Department of Health
- Arkansas Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics
- Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families
- Medicaid
- Parent Representatives

Principal Investigator: Dr. Maya Lopez

Co- Investigator: Dr. Dennis Kuo

Project Specialist: Carol Rangel

Data Coordinator: Nancy Miller

